



2012 City of Seattle Urban Forestry Efforts Industrial Areas

Trees are viewed as an important infrastructure element within the City of Seattle due to their role in promoting social, economic, and environmental health. In particular, trees manage stormwater by capturing and slowing rain; filter air and water pollution; provide food and habitat; and contribute to the character and aesthetic beauty of our neighborhoods and business districts.

In order to maximize the benefits of trees within Seattle, the City has engaged in an effort led by the Urban Forest Interdepartmental Team to update city-wide policies and regulations. This work has resulted in an update of the Urban Forest Management Plan as well as regulations for private property and street trees.

Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP):

The UFMP was created in 2007 to identify goals and strategies that will help Seattle maintain, preserve, restore, and enhance its urban forest, making Seattle a healthier, more beautiful place to live and work.

The UFMP is currently undergoing its first five-year update and the draft is available for public comment through October 1, 2012.

This update does not propose to change the city-wide canopy cover goal of 30% nor does it propose to change the canopy cover goal for industrial areas of 10%. Recent canopy cover assessments suggest that canopy cover in industrial areas may be as little as 4% (as opposed to 8% found in earlier assessments used to inform the original UFMP in 2007).

However, the update does not substantively change the City's strategy for industrial areas. The City, through the UFMP, continues to acknowledge the unique challenges for increasing canopy cover in industrial areas due to freight mobility and other industrial operations needs. Within industrial areas, the plan suggests to focus urban forestry efforts on designated industrial landscape streets. Industrial Landscape Streets are streets designated in SMC 23.50.016 for which adjacent property owners may be required to provide street trees and screening when their property undergoes substantial renovation.

The draft plan is available for public comment through October 1, 2012 at www.seattle.gov/trees/management.htm. Questions and comments should be sent to Sandra Pinto de Bader at Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@seattle.gov.

Street Tree Ordinance and Street Tree Manual Standards and Specifications:

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) urban forestry section is proposing an update to the current Street Tree Ordinance (last revised in 1961). This document was drafted with input from an advisory panel consisting of residents, commercial arborists,

and City staff from several departments. The intent of the ordinance update is to provide greater protection to street trees and to codify current practices and procedures. SDOT will be submitting the legislation to Council this summer.

The certified arborist supervision requirement contained in the Street Tree ordinance update will not be imposed on trees growing on private property in industrial areas. The provision only pertains to street trees in the right-of-way, which are mostly owned and maintained by SDOT, and it primarily regulates maintenance standards for street trees. SDOT believes proper maintenance of street trees will have fewer impacts on freight mobility and other industrial operations needs.

The public comment period for SDOT's Street Tree Ordinance has ended, but more information is available at www.seattle.gov/transportation/treeordinance.htm.

Private Property Tree Regulations Update:

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is undertaking a comprehensive update of the tree regulations governing private property. The intent of the update is to improve existing tree regulations in order to make them easier to understand, implement, and enforce and to implement a number of new measures that would expand or improve development standards to better mitigate the impacts of development.

After receiving extensive public comment on a draft proposal in 2010, DPD has developed an updated proposal and draft legislation which is available for public comment through October 1, 2012.

The update is proposing to retain existing tree and landscape standards for industrial areas, but would impose Green Factor landscaping requirements for new commercial development adding more than 4,000 sq ft of floor area (excludes certain heavy commercial uses).

The draft update and legislation is available at www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/trees. Questions and comments should be directed to Brennon.Staley@seattle.gov.